



Main Campus (K-8), 600 Tyler Street, Hastings, MN 55033  
ECC Preschool Campus, 2035-15th Street, Hastings MN 55033

p: 651-437-3098 f: 651-438-3377  
p: 651-438-3223 f: 651-438-2948

[seas-school.org](http://seas-school.org)

A Ministry of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

## St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School COVID-19 Update 9/16/21

Throughout the school year we will continue to update our SEAS family on our current COVID-19 protocols. As you can imagine, we get a lot of questions about how things are going and why decisions are made. You can expect these letters every two-three weeks during the school year. Our COVID-19 Information tab on our website is also updated regularly. Below are some frequently asked questions that we have received. Also included in this update is a breakdown for exposures and symptoms.

### FAQ

**Who makes decisions about COVID-19 protocols for SEAS?** As we are a parish school, Fr. Dave has the ultimate say in anything we do, but in this matter, we have shared the responsibility. Any changes made are done in consultation with our health office, members of our staff, and our school advisory committee.

**What information is used to help guide the development of protocols?** We receive regular updates from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will send out changes to their recommendations, which are usually reflected in the MDH updates. There is a virtual weekly meeting for school nurses that our health office and I regularly attend. I am also part of several administrators groups, for public and non-public schools, that share experiences, data and scientifically researched studies on the effects of mitigation efforts. We understand that there are a lot of different views on these subject matters and an endless supply of information to meet one's opinions or feelings available on the web, so we rely on information that has been published in journals (which are written by experts in their fields and subject to peer review). We accept the guidance of MDH and the CDC.

**What about the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis?** In 2020, the Archdiocese required all schools to develop a Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan (PPRP). This summer, they asked us to update it for the current school year. The Archdiocese does not have a policy on face coverings or quarantines for schools. They have provided sample letters on mitigation efforts and have asked that we employ a multitiered approach to combating COVID-19.

**Why are we in masks?** The largest study on school mitigation efforts, MDH, the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Hospital, Medical, and Nurses Associations all recommend masks indoors for everyone, especially the unvaccinated, which is the vast majority of our students. Vaccines, masks, ventilation, and good hand hygiene are essential to keep students in school.

**Will we be in masks all year?** I am hopeful that we will not be in masks all year, but it is more likely that masks will be on and off again throughout.

**What would change the mask requirement at SEAS?** Similar to what our local school district is doing, we are basing mask requirements on community transmission rates. If the rates are in



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the “low” range then masks will be recommended, but not required. We are currently in the “high” range. We evaluate these rates weekly. The site we rely on most can be found [here](#). We focus on the school district range, which is typically updated by Friday. Information can also be found at this [MDH](#) site or weekly at this [Dakota County](#) page.

**Why not let family's decide whether or not to wear a mask?** In short, because it defeats the purpose of wearing a mask if everyone is not participating. There are countless studies using experimental (relating to scientific experiments) and epidemiological (incidence, distribution, and control of diseases) data to support community masking as a way to reduce the spread of COVID. Masking also means that classroom exposures do not need to be quarantined.

**Will SEAS require students and staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19?** We currently do not have a vaccine requirement for COVID, especially since most of our students are not eligible to receive it yet. For those who are old enough, we recommend it.

### **Breakdown for COVID-19 Exposure**

There will always be situations that do not fit into our COVID protocols. Communication is key for helping us determine the best path forward that keeps students safe and in person.

#### **Exposure to a person with a lab confirmed case of COVID-19:**

- For the fully vaccinated or those who have had a lab diagnosed case of COVID-19 within the last 90 days, monitor for symptoms.
- At school when all are masked: Monitor for symptoms, but is not considered a close contact.
- At school if masks are only recommended: A person exposed to someone with a lab confirmed case of COVID-19 (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) is considered a close contact. The MDH Decision Tree will be followed.
- When a person in a household tests positive: This is considered a close contact and the MDH Decision Tree will be followed.
- Exposure outside the home or school setting: A person exposed to someone with a lab confirmed case of COVID-19 (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) is considered a close contact. The MDH Decision Tree will be followed.

### **For Those Not Feeling Well**

If you don't feel well, stay home or keep your child home and contact the school office or the health office. Below is a guideline of what to expect:

**One “less common” symptom** (sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, extreme fatigue/feeling very tired, new severe/very bad headache, new nasal congestion/stuffy or runny nose):

- Stay home and monitor symptoms.
- Return to school after 24 hours symptom free or alternate diagnosis is received in the SEAS Health Office.
- Siblings do not have to quarantine unless they show symptoms.



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**One “more common” symptom** (fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, new cough or a cough that gets worse, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, **or two or more “less common” symptoms listed above:**

- Stay home and monitor symptoms.
- Siblings would also need to quarantine unless fully vaccinated or they have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days. Proof of vaccination or positive COVID test provided to the SEAS Health Office.
  - Siblings can return once the negative COVID test results or an alternate diagnosis of the sibling with symptoms is received in the SEAS Health Office, providing they have remained symptom free.
- Take a COVID test or receive an alternate diagnosis from a physician.
- Can return to SEAS school/activities if all of the follow are true:
  - Negative COVID test results or an alternate diagnosis received in the SEAS Health Office.
  - Symptoms have improved.
  - Fever free without fever reducing medicines for 24 hours.
- If you choose not to get tested or provide proof of vaccination, then a 14 day quarantine from the onset of symptoms would be followed.
  - Siblings would also need to quarantine unless fully vaccinated or they have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

#### **Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19**

Stay home until all three are true:

1. They feel better.
2. It has been 10 days since they first felt sick or tested positive.
3. Fever free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication.

Siblings are considered a close contact and will be required to quarantine according to the MDH Decision Tree.

As those who have already reached out to me will hopefully attest to, I appreciate all the questions that I have received and I try to answer them as quickly and as honestly as I can. We may disagree, but I am always willing to listen. Thank you for your prayer and patience as we work through this pandemic.

God bless you all,

*Mr. Sullivan*

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.